

Apple, Michael W. *Ideology and Curriculum* (3rd edition). New York and London: Routledge Falmer, 2004. 234 pp. ISBN 0415949122

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Writings in anthropology and education often discuss the central role of ideology. Theoretically sophisticated explanations of how ideology is formed and reproduced in and by schools are less common. Michael Apple, in his third edition of *Ideology and Curriculum*, argues that ideology is legitimated as knowledge in schools to support specific social norms. These social norms in turn produce students and teachers who are unable to challenge social, economic, cultural, political, and educational disparity. Apple repeats his argument that the solution to the problem of educational disparity is to be found not in schools but in constructing a social order that is self-critical and focused on social and economic equality. This argument is still important today to audiences interested in anthropology and education, and crucial to scholars who conduct critical research in education. Unfortunately, Apple's updated treatise on ideology and curriculum, like the early editions, ignores gender and race, a point I will return to later.

The new edition of Apple's book includes two new chapters dealing with the after effects of September 11th and with current ideological regimes. These chapters focus on the role of the intellectual in reproducing ideologies that accept social and economic disparity as natural, neutral, and deserved. Apple argues that schools were created to act in accordance with specific value systems and meanings (specifically, to make children of immigrants more like those of the middle class and yet still able and willing to perform work that the middle class would not do) and over time this dynamic has come to be accepted as natural and to be unquestioned by those most involved: teachers, families, students, and scholars.

Apple insists that in order to be able to ask such questions about who benefits from an ideology that treats students and workers as products to be traded, tested, categorized, marketed, and regulated, the intellectual community (that is, people like us) needs to change in two fundamental ways. The first step is to help teachers and students feel comfortable with ambiguity, conflict, and dissent. Ideology or what Apple calls "legitimate knowledge" defines conflict as regressive, as an obstacle to social progress. Apple, in contrast, following Marx, argues that conflict should be presented as a positive social phenomenon that is necessary to change society. Secondly, we need to develop and employ discourses and analyses that are not built on industrial and corporate models and that therefore do not reflect industrial and corporate interests. This will help us to see school afresh and to become aware of our own complicity in the reproduction of social and economic inequality.



However, as I engaged with Apple's important discussion on the workings of ideology in the curriculum and in the reproduction of social class, I found myself bothered by his presentation of ideology as un-gendered, which raises the question, "Is class gender-neutral?" Do girls and boys receive the same ideological messages from the curriculum? I would suggest that (a) they are not, and (b) Apple fails to address the question.

Apple argues convincingly that schools historically have served to maintain power and control in the hands of the few, and that schools today continue to reproduce social inequality. In presenting this important if by now familiar argument Apple misses the opportunity to discuss gender differences in the interpellation of girls and boys. For example, a working class boy and girl in a high school in Detroit both may learn in school that they are neither smart enough nor academically well enough prepared to go to college. However the content of their interpellations may differ, with the girl coming to see herself as best suited to being a nurse's aide while the boy concludes he should be a mechanic, interpellations that carry gendered economic expectations. A parallel argument could be made for considering differences in the experience of racial and language groups of the same class.

Furthermore, Apple asks whose knowledge is legitimate and whose knowledge gets ignored and calls for self-critique, but he then goes on to draw almost entirely on white, male theorists whose writings are mostly concerned with the lives of men without problematizing the gendered and racialized nature of knowledge or heeding his own call to be self-critical. Apple, to his credit, acknowledges the "gains" made by "feminist research, post-colonial research, critical disability studies, critical race theory, critical discourse and analysis," but then fails to use them in his analyses or to address the concerns they raise.

I am not suggesting that these lapses invalidate the acuity of Apple's explanations. This book is deservedly the classic treatise on how ideology is reproduced in the school curriculum. The missing discussion in his book of the interaction of class, gender, and race in ideology and the curriculum as well as the missing voices of female theorists and theorists of color from the main body of the text provides an important reminder of why feminist, post-structural, post-colonial, Chicana/o, Black and Indigenous understandings of representation are all crucial to creating a social order centered on political, social and economic equality. Apple's insistence on progressive and self-critical systems of analysis is weakened by his failure to utilize such an approach in discussing race and gender disparities within ideology. Apple's lapses are examples of why legitimate knowledge is so difficult to critique and a new social order so difficult to actualize.